

THE WIMBORNE AND CRANBORNE RURAL DISTRICT
In the Administrative County of Dorset.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR 1949

SECTION A
General Statistics.

Civilian Population (Registrar General's Estimate)	20, 540
Total Population (Registrar General's Estimate)	20, 800
Number of inhabited houses. Estimated.	6, 250
Area.	80, 862
Rateable value.	£111, 925
Sum represented by Panny Rate.	£442. 13. 11.

Extract of vital statistics for year.

<u>Live Births.</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>
Legitimate.	280	141	139
Illegitimate.	28	20	8
	<u>308</u>	<u>161</u>	<u>147</u>

Live Birth Rate per 1000 Total Population. 14. 8

Live Birth Rate per 1000 Total Population England and Wales. 16. 7.

Still Birth Rate per 1000 Total Population. 0.28

Still Birth Rate per 1000 Total Population England and Wales. 0.39

Deaths Registered in 1949.

<u>Total.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>
291	153	138
Crude death rate per 1000 Total Population.		13.9
Crude death rate per 1000 Total Population England and Wales.		11.7
Number of women dying, or in consequence of, child birth.		0
<u>Deaths of Infants under one year.</u>	<u>Total 8.</u>	<u>3 M. 5 F.</u>
Premature Birth.	2	1
Congenital abnormality and other causes.	6	4
Number of deaths from measles.	1	1
Number of deaths from whooping cough.	1	0
Number of deaths from respiratory tuberculosis.	5	3
Number of deaths from other forms of tuberculosis.	1	1
Deaths from cancer (all ages)	54	34
Deaths from intracranial vascular lesions.	39	21
Deaths from heart disease.	92	59

Deaths from other diseases of circulatory system.	27	15	12
Deaths from pneumonia.	8	6	2
Deaths from bronchitis.	2	2	0
Deaths from other respiratory diseases.	4	4	0
Violent deaths.	7	4	3
Other causes.	12	15	17

SECTION B

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

Medical Officer of Health - part time - L.B. Scott, M.D., D.P.H.

Chief Sanitary Inspector with combined duties as Surveyor.

W. Hall, Cert. R.S.I., Cert. R.S.I.
(meat and other foods)

Deputy Sanitary Inspector with combined duties as Surveyor.

W.R. Chick, Cert. R.S.I

Additional Sanitary Inspector with combined duties as Surveyor.

D.C. Mulley, Cert. R.S.I. Cert. R.S.I.
(meat and other foods)

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

The Dorset County Council is responsible for the Ambulance operating from the Civic Centre, Wimborne and from Ferndown.

WELFARE CENTRES.

The Dorset County Council provide an Infant Welfare Centre in Wimborne once a week, twice a month at Ferndown, twice a month at Verwood and once a month at Sixpenny Handley.

ANTE NATAL CLINICS.

The Dorset County Council provide an Ante Natal Clinic twice a month at Wimborne.


LABORATORY FACILITIES.

The Public Health Laboratory Service at Dorchester and Poole have given the district very generous service.

SECTION C.

PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES DURING 1949

Scarlet Fever.	16
Whooping Cough.	94
Measles.	583
Acute Pneumonia.	19
Erysipelas.	8
Dysentary.	1
Acute Poliomyelitis.	7
Paratyphoid fever.	1
	<hr/>
TOTAL	729
	<hr/>



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ACUTE INCIDENTS

Scarlet
Fever.

Whooping
Cough.

Measles.

Acute Typhoid.

Typhoid.

Dysentery.

Acute Poliomyelitis.

Paratyphoid.

1-1 1

12

9

2-3 17

86

1

3-5 8

109

4-10 6

278

1

1

5-15 1

68

3

6-25 14

6

1

1

8-45 1

12

6

1

2

1-65 4

3

1

7

6 and over.

583

19

8

1

7

1

94

19

8

1

7

1

TUBERCULOSIS

Tuberculosis Cases on the Register at 31st December 1949

	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>
Pulmonary.	44	23
Non-Pulmonary.	10	8

TOTAL - 85

New Cases Notified During the Year.

Pulmonary.	12	4
Non-pulmonary.	2	2
(included in above figures)		

FOOD POISONING

There has been no outbreak of food poisoning during the year.

DISINFECTION

Number of disinfections carried out:-

After Tuberculosis.	3
After Scarlet fever.	3

SECTION D

WATER SUPPLIES

Eight Parishes are provided with piped supplies by Statutory Water Undertakers. Of these, the Parishes of Colchill, Hampreston, West Parley and Pamphill are within the Statutory area of and supplied by The Bournemouth Water Company. Only a very small part of the Parish of Pamphill (that portion adjacent to Wimborne) has a piped supply.

Corfe Mullen is supplied from the Borough of Poole's Waterworks, being part of that Authority's Statutory area of supply.

The Rural District Council have provided piped supplies in the Parishes of Alderholt, Cranborne and Verwood. Water is purchased in bulk from the West Hants Water Company to supply Alderholt, a deep borehole adequately supplies Cranborne, whilst Verwood is partly fed from Springs on Boveridge Heath, Verwood, and partly from a bulk supply purchased from the same Company and taken at Three Legged Cross.

Private piped supplies serve the majority of the properties in the Parishes of Hinton Martell, Long Crichel, Moor Crichel and Witchampton. These private sources will eventually be abandoned and the areas either supplied in bulk or direct from the Council's Regional Scheme when this comes into operation. Unfortunately very little progress was made towards this end during the year under review.

Difficulties were experienced at Verwood, particularly from June to September, in maintaining an adequate supply owing to drought conditions and an appreciable drop in the yield of the Springs at Boveridge Heath. Restrictions curtailing the use of water for domestic purposes only had to be imposed during this period. A booster pump was fixed at Three Cross to increase the supplementary supply taken from the West Hants Water Company and to enlarge the area of the Parish supplied from that source. This pump was operating approximately 600 hours, using 1,020 gallons of petrol during the restricted period.

The population with piped water available is, so far as it is possible to determine, about 14,000, and those dependent on wells or stored rainwater, approximately 7,500. 463 properties are supplied at Verwood, 143 properties at Cranborne and 128 at Alderholt, and of these, all have water laid on internally with the exception of 23 properties which have separate standpipes in the gardens, and seven temporary structures at Verwood which are supplied by two standpipes.

In order to overcome shortages, water was hauled to different Parishes, and in all, 316,000 gallons were delivered during the year.

Samples.

247 samples of water were taken for bacteriological analyses, of which 16 were from piped supplies afforded by the Council, 15 samples from Verwood, 20 from Cranborne and 11 from Alderholt.

With two exceptions at Verwood and seven at Cranborne, all were found to be Class 1. Those reported upon as unsatisfactory were taken from domestic supplies. Subsequent samples taken direct from the supply proved the sources to be satisfactory and that the adverse reports may have been due to sampling difficulties or unsatisfactory storage conditions on private premises.

From private wells, 76 samples gave bad results.

SEWERAGE.

None of the Parishes have main drainage, the majority of the properties have cesspools or septic tanks and soakaways which are a continual source of nuisance and at times create insanitary conditions.

Plans for the main Sewerage Scheme for the semi-urban residential area of the District were advanced so far as it was possible for this Council to do so, but since this is a joint scheme with neighbouring Authorities, difficulties, financial and technical have arisen, which it is hoped will be overcome in the near future.

Active operations in connection with the scheme for Cranborne, approved by the Ministry, are expected to begin early in the New Year.

Schemes for sewerage the Parishes of Corfe Mullen and Verwood were prepared by the Council's Consulting Engineers and considerable details and information in connection with these Schemes were obtained. Visits were made to 1,249 premises in the Parishes of Corfe Mullen and Verwood for investigation of existing conditions of water supply, sanitation and drainage.

A further survey was carried out in the Parishes of Colehill, Hampreston and West Parley in relation to the proposed Sewerage Scheme embracing 2,219 properties.

Housing Estates as developed by the Council have been provided with their own small Sewage Disposal Plants, and more were brought into use during the year, making a total of 10 now operating. It cannot be said that these Works are in every way satisfactory, as their limited size make satisfactory maintenance difficult.

RODENT CONTROL

The Council continues to exercise delegated powers under the Rats and Mice Act. One full-time operator is employed in conjunction with the Wimborne Urban District. During the year 2,727 visits have been made, including 231 visits to private houses.

HOUSING.

The number of new houses erected during the year:-

By the Council.....	90
By Private enterprise...	27
Houses owned by the Council at the end of the year.....	464
Pre-fabricated houses.....	None.
Hutments (ex Army Huts) occupied.....	16

INSPECTION OF HOUSES.

Total number of dwelling houses inspected for defects and classified (under Public Health or Housing Acts)..... 157
Total number re-inspected in detail for re-classification..... 74
These dwellings were classified as follows:-

Category 1 - Houses reasonably fit in all respects.....	63
Category 2.- Houses needing minor repair.....	23
Category 3.- Houses needing major repair.....	74
Category 5.- Impossible to repair at reasonable cost.....	71

Statutory Action

Notices of Time and Place served.....	24
Demolition Orders made.....	4
Undertakings given re future user.....	23
Undertakings given to repair.....	7
Repairs carried out in accordance with undertakings:-	
(a) given 1949.....	6
(b) prior 1949.....	3

PUBLIC CLEANSING

Scavenging. Collections are made fortnightly in the Parish of Cranborne, three weekly in the semi-urban Parishes and monthly in the Rural Parishes.

Refuse is tipped in three private pits in the area by the controlled tipping method.

Cesspools.

These are emptied upon request of ratepayers at a charge of 25/- per load. Disposal is on to waste or common land. This Scheme operated from the 1st October, 1949 and 300 cesspools were dealt with to the end of the year.

There is no scheme of night soil collection.

Meat and Other Foods.

There is no slaughterhouse operating within the Rural District. Every effort is made to examine the majority of pigs killed for home consumption.

Routine inspections of butchers' shops are made, and 40 condemnation certificates were issued. These included condemnation in respect of 452 lbs Home Killed Beef, 279 lbs Imported Beef and 7 lbs Imported Mutton, the remainder covering Tinned Foods.

INSPECTIONS

Total number of inspections.....	611
Total number of re-inspections.....	291
Total number of nuisances found.....	83
Total number of nuisances abated.....	83
Total number of informal notices.....	24
Total number of Statutory Notices.....	Nil
Total number of informal notices complied with.....	22
Total number of informal notices outstanding.....	2

SANITARY WORKS AND IMPROVEMENTS.

Dilapidated dustbins.	Nil
Choked drains.	3
Choked and defective eave spouts.	1
Defective flushing apparatus.	1
Keeping of animals in unsatisfactory conditions.	5
Defective constructions of drains.	Nil
Dirty condition of dwelling houses.	4
Defective W.C. basins.	1
Defective paving of yards.	Nil
Defective fireplaces.	3
Choked and defective rain water pipes.	Nil
Dirty condition of urinals, water closets etc.	2
Accumulation of rubbish.	1
Defective roofs.	2
Dirty condition of yards.	Nil
Defective floors.	4
Defective sinks.	Nil
Choked and defective waste pipes.	Nil
Broken plaster-work	Nil
Frontises in need of lime-washing.	Nil
Offensive smells.	3
Defective windows.	2
Dampness of dwelling houses	Nil

Dangerous structures.
Miscellaneous defective walls and structures.

1
Nil

TEMPORARY DWELLINGS.

33 dwellings were made of temporary structures.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS

Number of inspections of factories.
Number of nuisances found.
Number of nuisances abated.
Number of complaints from H.M. Inspector (dealt with)

4
Nil
Nil
Nil

BAKCHOUSES.

Number of bakchouses on register.
Number of inspections.
Number of nuisances discovered and dealt with.

2
4
Nil

COWSHEDS AND DAIRIES.

All records relating to these premises have been handed to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

MILK SAMPLING

80 samples were taken during the year, all were found to be satisfactory.

PREMISES REGISTERED UNDER THE FOOD AND DRUGS ACT. 1936

Premises used for the storage of, or manufacture of ice cream intended for sale:-

No. on register..... 20.
No. of inspections..... 13
Nuisances found..... Nil
Nuisances dealt with..... Nil

Results of sampling
Grades 1,2,3,4.
4,3,2,1.

L.B. SCOTT, M.D., D.P.H.
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

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WIMBORNE AND CRANBORNE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Medical Officer's Annual Report for the year 1948

The Minister of Health has again requested that this shall again be an abbreviated report, as free as possible from statistical details. He particularly asks for information on the following subjects:-

Action taken by the Council under Section 47 of the National Assistance Act to deal with aged or infirm people living under insanitary conditions.

Water Supplies.

Sewerage.

Control of meat and foods.

Outbreaks of food poisoning.

General Health Statistics

These indicate that the health of the population remained good. There was no unusual prevalence of any epidemic disease during the year.

The Birth rate was 17.1 per thousand of population, compared with 18.7 in 1947 and 19.5 in 1946. The National birth rate fell from 20.5 in 1947 to 17.9 in 1948.

The Death rate was 12.2 compared with 12.9 in 1947. The National rate for 1948 was 10.8.

Diphtheria

Notifications during 1948 were nil.

It has been my custom in these annual reports to give figures showing the progress of immunisation and the percentage of the child population, over and under the age of five, protected thereby. The collection of these details and the preparation of statistics has since July 5th 1948 become the duty of the County Council as Local Health Authority under the National Health Service Act. The figures for 1948 are not yet available.

Aged or infirm persons

This Council has so far not had to use its compulsory powers under Section 47 of the new Public Assistance Act to get an aged or infirm person, living in insanitary conditions, removed to an institution. Requests for this to be done have been received, but the Council has managed by one means or another to avoid compulsion.

The process of bringing this compulsion to bear is cumbrous and slow. Moreover, it is plainly not intended to be used if the person concerned can be persuaded to move of his own free will. This is by no means always the case, but his consent can often be gained by tactful persuasion. Formerly such persuasion was usually effected by the Relieving Officer, but the new Act has abolished this Officer and appointed no one with local contacts or knowledge to fill his place.

As a result, whether it was the intention of the Act or not, this function of the Relieving Officer has now devolved upon the Medical Officer of Health. The latter is brought into the picture by sub-section (2) of Section 47, which requires that the Local Authority must base its procedure upon a certificate from the Medical Officer of Health. He in fact becomes the pivotal person on whom all action depends, and it is to him that application is now commonly made when the friends, relations or medical attendant of an infirm person think that removal to an institution is necessary.

The Medical Officer's certificate must, in the words of the Act, be given only after "thorough enquiry and consideration". It is not

required if the infirm person consents to removal, but such consent is not easy to obtain and often requires a good deal of persuasion. The Medical Officer naturally wishes to avoid compulsion and must try every possible means of inducing the person to go voluntarily. These efforts and the thorough enquiry enjoined by the Act may take much time and often entail many visits and interviews or correspondence with relatives and neighbours. These cases are becoming frequent and the duty of dealing with them is no light task. A medical man or woman is perhaps a very suitable person to perform it, but the Act does not appear to have intended that the mantle of the defunct Relieving Officer should descend upon the Medical Officer of Health.

A special difficulty in dealing with such cases is the shortage of institutional beds. The delay in getting accommodation for these old and infirm people has become much worse since the Act came into force. It is sometimes a matter of months before admission can be arranged.

Water Supplies

Nine Parishes are provided, some only partly, with piped supplies. The remaining sixteen are dependent on wells, or in a few cases on stored rain water. In some parts of the District the wells yield a water of very inferior quality. In other parts they run dry and water has to be carted.

It may be said in general that the water supply of those parts of the District without piped water is bad. The Council has a comprehensive scheme to remedy this which has now been sanctioned by the Ministry of Health after a public enquiry.

The population with piped water available is about 13,250 and those dependent on wells or rain water about 7,170. Of the houses with piped supplies practically all have water laid on internally. It is estimated that only some 30 people have to draw from standpipes.

Samples 140 bacteriological analyses of drinking water were made, 63 from piped supplies and 77 from wells. Of the piped specimens 8 gave bad results. Three supplies were concerned. In two of them the lapse in quality was temporary and of short duration. In the third it was more obstinate.

From the wells 47 out of 77 specimens gave bad results.

12 chemical analyses were also made.

Sewerage

Main drainage is at present non-existent and, as I have stressed before, the process of laying water on to the inside of houses without proper sewerage has already gone much too far. The result is a multiplicity of cesspools, septic tanks and soakaways which are a continual source of nuisance and insanitary conditions.

This question becomes more and more urgent as the Council develops its new housing estates, all of them equipped with piped water, baths and water closets.

At present each of these estates has to have its own small temporary sewage disposal plant. Two new ones were brought into use during 1948, making four now operating. These are sure to give trouble and have begun to do so already. The Council at the present moment is under threat of legal proceedings in connection with two of them, by reason of alleged nuisance or damage from the effluents.

It seems very doubtful whether it will ever be an economic possibility to put main sewerage into the small scattered villages of a rural area like this, and if not it would have been better to stick to a dry conservancy system with earth closets.

In one part of the District however, main sewerage is a practical possibility, and indeed an urgent requirement. This is the semi-urban residential area in the south east corner of the district, where there has been a piped water supply for many years and the soil formation is particularly unsuitable for the disposal of sewage by cesspools and soakaways. The Council's plans for main sewerage in this area were drawn up more than twelve years ago, but it has not yet been possible to make a start on the work though some progress towards a start has been made lately.

The village of Cranborne too, where the river Crane is becoming a sewer, is in urgent need of main drainage. The Council's scheme for this has been sanctioned by the Minister of Health, and work is likely to start on it before long.

Meat and other foods

There is now no slaughterhouse within the District. A good many pigs are killed for home consumption and efforts are made to see that they are inspected before being eaten.

Routine inspection of food shops and cafes is carried out.

As regards milk supplies, this Council is concerned with retailers rather than with producers. Samples are taken for purity tests about every three months from all registered milk sellers.

Ice cream is not manufactured in the District, but there are 14 licensed retailers who sell prepacked products. They receive very limited quantities from the wholesalers which are almost immediately sold out to the public. Consequently it is almost impossible to get samples for analysis.

Food Poisoning

No outbreaks were reported and only a single case was notified, the cause of which was quite unusual.

A man bought three Jaffa oranges, ate one, gave one away and kept the third. His orange had a peculiar taste and within 20 minutes of eating it he was seized with violent vomiting, was ill for two or three days, but did not consult a doctor. A few days later he saw a report in the Press about food poisoning and the importance of medical enquiry into all such cases. He therefore telephoned to me an account of his illness. I was able to get from him the third orange, which he still had, and to send it for analysis. The Analyst found two punctures in the skin of the orange such as might have been made by the needle of a hypodermic syringe, and antimony in the pulp of the fruit equivalent in amount to a stiff emetic dose of tartar emetic (potassium antimony tartrate). Antimony is a poison which produces symptoms similar to those of arsenic. The person who tampered with the oranges apparently had sufficient knowledge not to inject more than an adult emetic dose, but if a child had eaten one of them, the dose would have caused severe symptoms and possibly death.

The incident was at once reported to the Police and to the Ministry of Health. So far as I know the Police enquiry led to no definite conclusion and the Ministry of Health had heard of no similar cases elsewhere.

Though this was the only case of food poisoning notified, there was a general impression that stomach and bowel disorders, causing short but inconvenient illnesses, were unduly prevalent. No evidence of this was to be found in the figures of notified disease. There was no case of infantile diarrhoea, only one of dysentery and one of enteric fever, the last almost certainly due to eating uncooked cockles.

L.B. Scott
M.D., D.P.H.

